

Commissioner Deborah A. Gist's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, May 4, 2012

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Attachment to this field memo:

Education Aid data update 5-4-12

Action Item Calendar

May 25: [Professional Learning Community](#) grant applications due
June 1: Educator Talent Pool packets submission deadline (see below)
June 1: District Teacher of the Year application deadline (see below)
June 8: Data collection for [PARCC Technology Readiness](#) Tool due
June 30: Schools and districts submit [final personnel assignments](#)
July 15: Deadline for final reporting of [evaluation ratings](#)

Notes from Commissioner Gist:

1. RIDE to release Growth Model data, Growth Model Visualization Tool

We are very excited that this week we will go live with our Growth Model Visualization Tool, which provides interactive data reports about student progress on the annual state assessments in mathematics and reading. The Rhode Island Growth Model adds a new dimension to our reports on school achievement, which will help guide us as we work to accelerate all of our schools toward greatness. The Growth Model Visualization Tool will enable you, the members of your team, and the public at large to see what percentage of students attained proficiency on the state NECAP assessments and how much progress students have made, relative to their academic peers, from one year's assessment to the next.

On **Wednesday** (May 9), we will provide you with growth data for grades 3 through 7. We plan to notify the public and the media about the Growth Model Visualization Tool next week as well, so you may anticipate receiving calls about your growth data.

Following the release of the growth data, RIDE will host regional workshops for elementary- and middle-school principals and other school and district leaders. Since our last notice to you on this matter, we have added a new session, on May 23, from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m., at New England Institute of Technology East Greenwich Campus.

The full calendar of sessions and online registration is available through the RIDE calendar, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/applications/ridecalendar.aspx>

In case you cannot attend a workshop, we will also host a webinar on the Rhode Island Growth Model and Growth Model Visualization Tool on Wednesday, May 9, from 9:30 -10:30 a.m. To register, please visit:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment/CAS.aspx>

The Growth Model will be an important element going forward in our educator evaluations, and, pending approval from the U.S. Department of Education, it will be a key element in our school classifications and our accountability system. It is important that you and the members of your team become familiar with the Growth Model and with the Growth Model Visualization Tool.

If you have any questions about the webinar or the workshops, please contact Jessica Brown, at Jessica.Brown@RIDE.RI.GOV or 222-8253, or Ana Karantonis, at Ana.Karantonis@RIDE.RI.GOV or 222-8940.

2. Districts urged to submit Teacher of the Year selections, to nominate candidates for Educator Talent Pool

Next week is National Teacher Recognition Week, and in that spirit I want to remind you of a few of our initiatives that are part of our year-round effort to recognize and honor the many excellent teachers and school leaders in our state.

For the past several weeks, we have been requesting nominations for the Educator Talent Pool. RIDE maintains a file of eminent teachers and principals, and throughout the year these educators may be considered for membership on advisory boards and task forces and as candidates for special-recognition programs. This year, we are asking you to recommend up to 3 individuals who represent educators *relatively new to the profession* (5 to 12 years) who demonstrate unusual instructional and inspiring presence that affects students, colleagues, and the community

To ensure that you have time to make your nominations, we are extending the deadline for submission of completed packets to **June 1**.

For instructions on how to complete the Educator Talent Pool packets, please see:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Educ/atorQuality/Recognition/default.aspx>

If you have any questions about the timeline for your LEA, please contact Mary Keenan (mary.keenan@ride.ri.gov), Educator Recognition Coordinator.

Several LEAs have also requested more time to send in their District Teacher of the Year candidate selection. Therefore, we have also extended the Teacher of the Year application deadline to **June 1** to allow you time to complete the application process and selection.

To date, we have received District Teacher of the Year names from 19 districts and from 1 charter public school. I strongly encourage you to select a teacher to represent your LEA throughout the next (2012-13) school year. The Teacher of the Year program is a key part of our work toward ensuring educator excellence, and I want to have 100-percent participation in our state. Keep in mind that we have streamlined the application process for District Teacher of the Year, so the process of applying should not be a barrier to participation. I intend to follow up this message with phone calls to LEAs that have not submitted Teacher of the Year candidates.

We have expanded our Teacher of the Year Program to reward and recognize Rhode Island teachers for their dedication and talent. Each appointed LEA representative will have the opportunity to participate in a year-long Mentor and Support Program that will help them prepare for the State Teacher of the Year application process, conducted in the spring of 2013. As a cohort, district Teachers of the Year will meet three to four times during their year of service to share ideas and to receive support from RIDE regarding how to complete the state application.

For instructions on how to complete the Teacher of the Year application, see:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Educ/atorQuality/Recognition/default.aspx>

If you have any questions about the timeline for your LEA, please contact Mary Keenan (mary.keenan@ride.ri.gov), Educator Recognition Coordinator.

3. Commissioner addresses General Assembly on the State of Education in Rhode Island 2012

I always enjoy the opportunity to speak to the public about the progress we have made as we work together to transform education in our state. On Tuesday, I was honored to be able to present my 3rd Annual State of Education Address to a joint session of the General Assembly. I assured the membership and other friends of education who came to hear the address that Rhode Island is recognized around the country as a leader in public education:

Even in these tough economic times, when other states are cutting funding and programs, Rhode Island remains committed to public education. People around the country recognize that Rhode Island is leading the way in public education – and we should be proud of that!

Preparing all students, including our students in adult-education programs, for college and for challenging careers is the greatest investment we can make in our future. Investment in public education is essential to the economic development and the future prosperity of our state.

I called my address “Leading the Way: The State of Education in Rhode Island 2012,” and I cited several accomplishments from the past year, including our significant improvements on the National Assessment for Educational Progress (“The Nation’s Report Card”) and receipt of a \$50-million federal Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant – making us one of only six states to receive two Race to the Top awards.

I also recognized several students, teachers, principals, superintendents, schools, and districts for their accomplishments and awards received over the past year.

I appreciate all the work you have done this year as we take on many new challenges, including our new evaluation system and the transition to the Common Core State Standards. We have enjoyed many successes during the year, and I look forward to continuing to work together to make our schools America’s best.

You can read the full text of the address here:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/DOCUMENTS/2012/State%20of%20Education%20address%20-%20print%20v%20-%205-1-12.pdf>

4. RIDE receiving feedback on full implementation of educator evaluations

As we near the end of our year of gradual implementation of our evaluation system, we should be proud of what we have accomplished and what we have learned. As a result of the feedback from educators that we have received and are still receiving, I am confident that, as a state, we are ready to move forward.

From the outset of the evaluation process, we have sought participation and guidance from educators, including teachers and superintendents, through development committees, public

forums, webinars, district visits, meetings, and a dedicated e-mail address specifically for evaluations.

We take all feedback seriously, from the design phase up to the present. As I told your executive board yesterday, we have heard loud and clear that the evaluation system was too cumbersome in some respects. In response, we have proposed several changes to go into effect during next year's full implementation, including reducing the number of competencies under review and reducing the number of classroom observations.

As we consolidate the feedback we are receiving, we will put forward more changes to make the evaluation system stronger and better. These revisions are an annual process – we will improve the model *every* year.

As you discuss evaluations with your teams, please keep the purpose of the evaluations in the forefront of your mind: These evaluations are about ongoing professional development and continuous improvement.

We all are committed to ensuring that the evaluation process goes well at the school level this year and during next year's full implementation. Teachers need to respect and trust their principals and others on the evaluation team. Teachers need to be assured that the process will provide them with high-quality feedback and guidance on how to improve their professional work.

Please let me know if I can help in any way to facilitate the process in your district during this school year or next fall.

5. Tiverton student is regional finalist in national Doodle4Google competition

For the second year in a row, Megan Kelchner, a senior at Tiverton High School, is the regional finalist in the national Google4Doodle competition. Megan is one of 10 high-school regional finalists selected from more than 114,000 entries. To see her entry and to cast your vote for the national winner, go to:

<http://www.google.com/doodle4google/vote.html#d=d5-10>

The national finalists and the national winner will receive college scholarships. Congratulations, Megan, and good luck in the national competition!

From RIDE:

6. Housing-aid reimbursement forms due July 15

Please see this note from our Office of Statewide Efficiencies:

School districts that complete school-housing projects for repair, renovation, or new construction may be eligible for state housing-aid reimbursement, pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws 16-7-35 through 16-7-47. These laws are designed to guarantee

adequate school housing for all public-school children and to prevent the cost of school housing from interfering with the effective operation of the schools. Fiscal Year 2013 housing-aid instructions and forms are now available online. For detailed information, instructions, and forms, please visit:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Finance/Funding/construction/default.aspx>

Forms are due by **July 15**. Please note that the General Assembly is considering legislation that may change the housing-aid payments from October 31 and April 30 to September 15 and March 15. If this legislation is enacted, RIDE will have a narrow window to finalize calculations to accommodate the September payment schedule; therefore, it is extremely important that all housing-aid submissions be submitted by the July 15 deadline.

7. Deadline for submission of Educator Talent Pool packets extended to June 1

Please see this note from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

Reminder - RIDE clarifies Summer Academy attendance requirements

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

Anyone who is responsible for evaluating both teachers and building administrators (e.g., a principal who evaluates teachers and an assistant principal, or a central-office staff member who evaluates teachers and principals) is required to attend only the four-day Summer Academy for Personnel Evaluating Teachers.

For additional information about both Summer Academies, please visit our updated training-registration page, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/TrainingReg.aspx>

8. *Reminder - RIDE recruiting Regents Educator Quality Evaluation Systems Fellow*

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

We are seeking an outstanding teacher or administrator to become a Regents' Educator Quality Evaluation Systems Fellow beginning in the next (2012-13) school year. The fellowship is granted and reviewed each year, with a potential of an additional one or two years. We are seeking candidates with strong leadership skills and practical experience implementing educator evaluation. For additional information about the fellowship, including an application packet, please go to:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/Docs/EdQ_EvalSystems_Fellow_Application.doc.

9. Date changed for Educator Recognition Celebration in September

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

Please note the change of date for the next Teacher of the Year announcement and Educator Recognition Celebration: Wednesday, September 19, from 4 to 7 p.m., at Orchard Farms Elementary School, 1555 Scituate Ave., Cranston 02921. As you may know, RIDE is planning to expand the next Teacher of the Year announcement and Educator Recognition Celebration to include the announcement of the winner and new benefits and prizes for the state Teacher of the Year and district Teachers of the Year. Please hold this date, and we will distribute further information as the time nears. For questions about this event or the Teacher of the Year program, please contact Mary Keenan, at mary.keenan@ride.ri.gov.

10. RIDE announces opportunity for educators to participate in the expansion of the Civics GSEs

Please see the following announcement from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

RIDE is moving forward with an initiative to expand the Civics GSEs to move from the hybrid of the Civics GSEs and the Social Studies Guide (*Standards-Based Guide for SS Programs in RI Schools*, from 2001) to include strands in geography, economics, and history. The Rhode Island K-12 Grade Span Expectations for Civics & Government and Historical Perspectives/R.I. History ("Civics GSEs") were adopted in 2008 and, in the life cycle of standards, are due for a review and an update. The development process will follow the same pattern as the development of the Civics GSEs in 2006, with opportunities for educator participation and district feedback.

RIDE is soliciting applications for elementary, geography, economics, and history teachers to participate in a day-long drafting session on June 4 (location TBA). The teachers participating in this session will be grouped into teams for elementary school, middle school, and high school. These three teams will also be involved throughout the summer to review and revise the new draft strands and to develop supporting resources. RIDE will post an informational packet and district feedback form, at <http://www.ride.ri.gov/Instruction/civics.aspx>, on the development process for districts, schools, and teachers to review and discuss prior to the session. Feedback received will inform the discussions and decisions at the full-day work session

Applications must be submitted by Tuesday, **May 22**, at 4 p.m., using the application form, at <http://www.ride.ri.gov/Instruction/civics.aspx>, and including applicant resumes. RIDE will then review and select up to eight educators per grade-level team (elementary school, middle school, high school) so that we have a balance of representation. We look forward to receiving your educators' applications!

11. RIDE updates calculations of education aid for Fiscal Year 2013

Please see this message from our Finance Office:

As part of the funding-formula law, state education aid is based on data from one year prior to the year in which the state distributes the aid. Therefore, we must base Fiscal Year 2013 aid on enrollment and free or reduced-price lunch data from Fiscal Year 2012. To fulfill this mandate, we collected data on student enrollments and free or reduced-price lunch status from the beginning of the current school year through March 14. This information is annualized to reflect a full year. We also adjusted the data for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 to account for the results of the charter-public-school lotteries held earlier this year. Remember that the funding formula spreads all changes over the remaining years of the transition: over 6 years for those LEAs that currently receive insufficient state funding and over 9 years for those LEAs that currently receive an excess of state funding.

The net effect is a slight increase in education aid (\$571,817) from Governor Chafee's Recommended Budget for FY 2013. The attached analysis (Education Aid data update 5-4-12) does not include the proposed \$11 million to accelerate the implementation of the funding formula for underfunded LEAs. If this proposal is enacted by the General Assembly, final aid numbers will be updated. The analysis does include updates for the regional bonus and for the transportation categorical fund. The other proposals in the Governor's budget, including the adjustments for Education Jobs Fund money, are unaffected by these updates.

Please note that we have forwarded this data to the Governor and to the General Assembly for their consideration. No changes will go into effect until the General Assembly passes the annual appropriations bill.

We have attached to this field memo a table showing the data updates to the Governor's Recommended FY 2013 aid to education. If you have any questions, please contact Kristen Cole, at 222-4681 or kristen.cole@ride.ri.gov.

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/fieldmemos/default.aspx>